

Message Text

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SUBJ: BALTIMORE SUN ARTICLE ON TURKISH TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM CYPRUS

THERE FOLLOWS TEXT OF ARTICLE ENTITLED "MINOR TURKISH WITH-
DRAWAL ON CYPRUS BUOYS HOPES FOR PROGRESS AT UN TALKS"
PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER 23 BALTIMORE SUN:

BEGIN TEXT. ENCOURAGED BY THE RECENT WITHDRAWAL OF 700
TURKISH TROOPS FROM CYPRUS, THE UNITED STATES IS PRESSING
FOR AN EARLY RESUMPTION OF TALKS BETWEEN THE TURKISH AND
GREEK COMMUNITIES ON THE ISLAND. THESE TALKS HAVE BEEN
STYMIED SINCE JUNE, AFTER THREE UNPRODUCTIVE SESSIONS
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EARLIER THIS YEAR.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT VIEWS THE WITHDRAWAL, WHICH INVOLVED
ONLY A SMALL FRACTION OF THE 28,000 TURKISH
TROOPS ON CYPRUS, AS HAVING DIPLOMATIC RATHER THAN MILITARY
SIGNIFICANCE. IT FOLLOWS REMOVAL OF AN AIR UNIT IN
OCTOBER AND COINCIDES WITH WHAT ONE U.S. OFFICIAL DESCRIBED

AS "POSITIVE" SIGNALS FROM THE TURKS, WHO HAVE CONTROLLED ABOUT 40 PERCENT OF THE ISLAND SINCE THE 1974 INTERVENTION.

THE U.S. HAS CONSISTENTLY SOUGHT A PERMANENT SETTLEMENT, WITH GREEK AND TURKISH COMMUNITIES SHARING POWER IN AN AGREEMENT REACHED AT THE UNITED NATIONS-SPONSORED INTER-COMMUNAL TALKS.

THE TWO MAJOR STICKING POINTS ARE THE POWER-SHARING MECHANISM UNDER A NEW CONSTITUTION AND THE EVENTUAL TERRITORIAL DIVISION. BOTH SIDES BASICALLY AGREE ON A BIZONAL SYSTEM WITH EACH ZONE ENJOYING A DEGREE OF AUTONOMY AND BEING REPRESENTED ON A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

BUT THE GREEK CYPRIOTS, WITH NEARLY 80 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION, WOULD LIKE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO BE AS STRONG AS POSSIBLE. THEY ALSO ARGUE THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE A STRONG MAJORITY IN THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE OF THEIR NUMBERS.

THE TURKISH CYPRIOTS REJECT ANY PERCENTAGE APPROACH, AND ARE DETERMINED TO KEEP THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT COMPARATIVELY WEAK UNDER A CONFEDERATION OF EQUAL PARTNERS. TERRITORIALY, THE ARGUMENT IS NOT SO MUCH ON THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL AS OVER THE SPECIFICS: HOW MUCH AND WHERE.
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GIVEN THE DEADLOCK AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS, BOTH THE GREEKS AND THE UNITED NATIONS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN RELUCTANT TO RECONVENE THE TALKS UNLESS THERE APPEARED A GOOD PROSPECT OF AGREEMENT. IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE TURKS ARE TRYING TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THE TALKS CAN BE RESUMED, ALTHOUGH THE TIMING COULD BE COMPLICATED BY FEBRUARY'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON THE ISLAND.

THE U.S. ARGUMENT IS THAT THE TALKS SHOULD BE STARTED AHEAD OF THE ELECTION, BUT THERE IS SOME FEELING ON THE ISLAND THAT THEY MAY HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE SPRING.

AN OFFICIAL STATE DEPARTMENT STATEMENT THIS WEEK INTERPRETED THE TURKISH TROOP WITHDRAWAL AS "EVIDENCE OF GOODWILL TOWARDS RESUMED NEGOTIATION," AND SAID THAT OTHER MILITARY WITHDRAWALS WERE ALSO ANTICIPATED.

"WE ARE THEREFORE ENCOURAGED BY THIS ACTION. WE HOPE THAT IT WILL LEAD TO FURTHER SUCH STEPS TO CONTRIBUTE TO A LESSENING OF TENSION ON THE ISLAND SO IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO RESUME MEANINGFUL INTERCOMMUNAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE

ISLAND UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UN," THE STATEMENT SAID.
END TEXT. VANCE

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